Liberating Latinx Communities: Understanding the Intersection of Oppressive Systems and Trauma.

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What I See, Could Be Me

Privileged Father Middle Class Male Catholic Texan **Cultural Worker** Husband Feminist Social Justice Mexican American Son **Oppressed** Cisgender Oppressor Professor Heterosexual **Psychologist**

Family Pictures

Cultural Humility



Cultural Humility

Cultural humility involves (a) a lifelong motivation to learn from others, (b) critical self-examination of cultural awareness, (c) interpersonal respect, (d) developing mutual partnerships that address power imbalances, and (e) an other-oriented stance open to new cultural information (Mosher, Hook, Farrell, Watkins, & Davis, 2017).

On-going consciousness about the interaction of power, privilege, and oppression in every circumstance with the intention of promoting respect and mutual empowerment (Woods-Jaeger, Cho, & Briggs, 2020).



"isms" Revisited...They Still Matter...and Race Still Matters

ARE GREATER THAN FEAR

What It Looks Like To Be Traumatized...and Retraumatized

- Intersectional oppression can include coinciding experiences of racism, sexism, heterosexism, ablebodyism, ageism, classism, religious intolerance, transphobia, and/or xenophobia.
- "Racial trauma is exacerbated by intersectionality because persons live with multiply oppressed statuses such as African American Muslim women, Jewish transgender men, undocumented Latinas who are differently abled, and homeless Asian American gender-nonconforming adolescents" (Bryant-Davis, 2019, p. 404).
- Descendants who did not experience the trauma directly can still evidence signs and symptoms of distress related to the trauma (Levin, 2006).
- Some scholars have examined intergenerational poverty as an intergenerational trauma as it is often associated with denial of access to resources, stigma, and feelings of helplessness, powerlessness, danger, and persistent psychological distress (Kneebone, Nadeau, & Berube, 2011).

Some Effects of Exposure to "isms"

- Hypertension and Cardiovascular Reactivity
- Negative Health Behaviors (smoking, low routine health care)
- Depression and Anxiety; increase suicide risk
- Hostility, Anger (expressed and suppressed)
- Difficulties concentrating and distractibility
- Avoidance
- Identity Confusion
- Internalized oppression
- Disruption of Interpersonal Relationships
- Low self-esteem

Implicit Bias

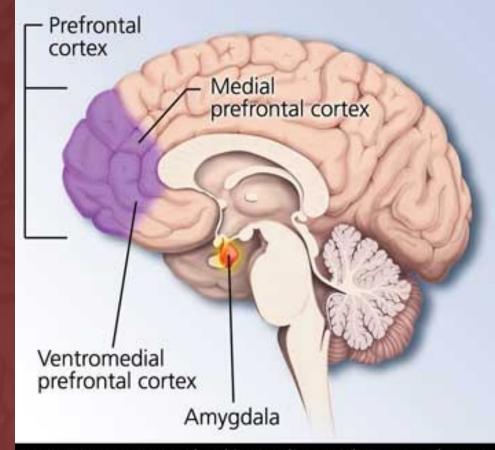
Implicit Bias Defined

- Implicit biases arise through overlearned associations (Kawakami, Dovidio, Moll, Hermsen, & Russin, 2000), which may be rooted in early childhood socialization, repeated personal experience, widespread media exposure, or cultural representations of some target group.
- Implicit bias is the bias in judgment and/or behavior that results from subtle cognitive processes (e.g., implicit attitudes and implicit stereotypes) that often operate at a level below conscious awareness and without intentional control.
- We all have biases, but the impact of our biases on others depends on the roles we play in society
- *Implicit bias is a stronger predictor of day to day behavior than explicit bias* because much of our behavior/thoughts are automatic
- IB is more likely when 1) trying to attend to multiple things, 2) stressed, 3) under high threat

Neuroscience and Implicit Bias

- Medial Prefrontal Cortex (mPFC) activates when we see someone as "highly human." Likewise, that same part of our brain fails to activate when we dehumanize people.
- Amygdala is the integrative center for emotions, emotional behavior, and motivation.
- Studies have shown that the amygdala activates when we feel fear, threat, anxiety and distrust.

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Brain Structures Involved in Dealing with Fear and Stress

What does implicit bias look like in the real world?

If we all begin at the same place...

- Taller employees receive higher wages than their shorter counterparts (Schick Steckel, 2015)
- Qualifications being equal (credit score, financial history, income, etc.), Blacks and Latinos were less likely to be approved for mortgages, and paid higher interest rates when they were approved (U.S. Housing and Urban Development report, 2015)
 - Crime and circumstances being equal, Blacks and some subgroups of Latinos are more likely to be stopped, searched, arrested, receive poor plea deals, convicted, receive longer sentences, receive the death penalty, declined probation and declined a pardon (DOJ, U.S. Census).
- Individuals with drug and alcohol addictions encounter bias throughout the criminal justice and health care systems.
 - The bias in these systems is intensified when racial dynamics become part of the treatment process.

Substance Use, Criminal Sentencing, and Implicit Bias

Term for Addictions and Implicit Bias (Ashford, Brown, and Curtis, 2018)

 Brown & Curtis (2018) suggest that stigmatizing terms used to describe individuals who have a substance addiction, including "addict," alcoholic," and "substance abuser," may be associated with negative explicit and implicit biases.

 They suggest that terms such as 'substance abuser,' 'addict,' 'opioid addict,' 'alcoholic,' and 'relapse' should be used sparingly, if at all.

 More positive terms can be used in their place, such as 'person with a substance use disorder,' 'person with an opioid use disorder,' 'person with an alcohol use disorder,' and 'recurrence of use,' and are likely to elicit stronger positive implicit bias and minimize any negative explicit or implicit bias.

Implicit Bias and Substance Abuse Treatment

- Robert Wood Johnson's Substance Abuse Policy Research Program (2009) found large racial and ethnic disparities in substance abuse treatment, including placement in appropriate care.
- These disparities can look like minimizing the need for intensive services, making assumptions about social supports or not understanding the day-to-day barriers to treatment.
- Implicit bias can impact diagnosis and treatment planning, misinterpreting behavior as noncompliant, oppositional, or resistant.
- Implicit bias plays out in how treatment unfolds, how effective it is and potentially premature termination.
- As a provider creates treatment goals and reports on progress, unchecked bias can have an enormous impact. Our perception of behavior can be off without us realizing it.

Criminal Sentencing and Implicit Bias

 Research on racial disparity utilizes broad racial/ethnic categories such as Black, White, and Latino, and has examined the ways in which these broad categories impact sentencing outcomes. However, research suggests that when solely using these broad racial categories, race may not be as salient of a predictor for sentencing outcomes as previously thought (Crutchfield, Fernandez, & Martinez, 2010; Spohn, 2000).

 Tonry (2010) states that overt bias based on racial categories is no longer a factor in most sentencing decisions, but he reports that unconscious bias undoubtedly has an effect on judicial decision making.

 One study examined Afrocentric facial features among male offenders in Florida and found that although racial category alone did not appear to have an effect on sentencing outcomes, Afrocentric facial features were associated with longer sentence length when controlling for legally relevant factors (Blair, Judd, & Chapleau, 2004).

Criminal Sentencing and Implicit Bias

• Price (2006) found that when controlling for a variety of individual and case characteristics, those with darker skin tone received longer prison sentences than those with lighter skin tone.

 Viglione, Hannon, & DeFina, (2011) examined sentencing outcomes for Black females in North Carolina. When researchers controlled for legally relevant case characteristics, results demonstrated that light-skinned females received 12% shorter sentences and served an actual sentence that was 11% shorter than dark-skinned females.

Rachlinski, Johnson, Wistrich, & Guthrie, (2009). Judges participated in a study and took an Implicit Association Test (IAT). They found that White judges tended to express strong "White preference" while the preferences of Black judges tended to express more diverse preference (i.e. Black, White, or neutral), yet still expressed bias.

Criminal Sentencing and Implicit Bias

- Part II of the same study examined how implicit biases influenced judges' sentencing decisions in response to hypothetical scenarios.
- In one task, the judges were subliminally primed with either Black-associated words or raceneutral words before making a sentencing decision in a hypothetical scenario. The judges were not told the race of the defendant.
- Authors found that when the judges were primed with Black-associated words, those who expressed White-preference during the IAT gave longer sentences, and those who expressed Black-preference gave shorter sentences.
- In a separate task, when the judges were explicitly told the race of the defendant, there was no association between race-preference on the IAT and sentence length.

Identifying Implicit Bias

- The Implicit Associations Test (IAT): measures the strength of subconscious associations between concepts/groups (e.g., Race, LGBTQI+, Gender, Age) and evaluations (e.g., good, bad) or stereotypes (e.g., athletic, clumsy)
 - The IAT is not perfect, but it does correlate with various implicit and explicit behaviors

Talk to trusted friend/family member:

- Think about someone in your life who knows you really well
- Give them a "pass" to give you honest feedback about the biases they think you have
- And then you listen without becoming defensive
 - Sometimes, other people can see your biases before you do.

Breaking The Prejudice Habit (Devine, Forscher, Austin, & Cox, 2012)

- People must be aware of their biases;
- People must be concerned about the consequences of their biases before they will be motivated to exert effort to eliminate them;
- People need to know when biased responses are likely to occur; and How to replace those biased responses with responses more consistent with their goals.



Liberating Latinx Communities:

"Never look for a psychological explanation unless every effort to find a cultural one has been exhausted."

William Fielding Ogburn

What's in a name?

- Latinx: The term Latinx is used to refer to persons of Latino origin wherever they might be on the gender spectrum. While considered imperfect by scholars, it is considered the most inclusive option for people of varied gender identities (Salinas & Lozano, 2017).
- It also serves to remind us to maintain an intersectional perspective. The term Latinx is pronounced Latin-ex.
 The term Latinx is tied to geography. Latinxs are primarily people with national origins in Latin America.
- Latinx Psychology is defined as the application of cultural traditions and practices into healing with the intent to restore connectedness, foster liberation, and facilitate ethnic identity reformulation. Latinx psychology endorses a relational orientation through the healing of oneself, providing a connectedness to family, ancestors and social and environmental contexts (Comas-Díaz, 2006).

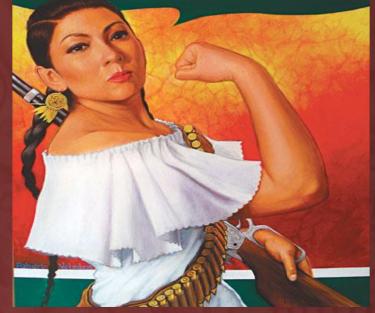
NO HUMAN BEING IS ILLEGAL

Human beings can be beautiful or more beautiful, they can be fat or skinny, they can be right or wrong, but illegal? How can a human being be illegal?

- Elie Wiesel

"They tried to bury us. They didn't know we were seeds." -Mexican Proverb

i Sí Se Puede!



Latinx Immigrants

 Latinx immigrants are incredibly diverse (Alegria et al., 2007) and we cannot assume all experiences are the same.

• The reasons Latinxs immigrate to the U.S. are as diverse as the Latinx population itself.

• A poll conducted by the Pew Hispanic Center (Gonzalez-Barrera, Lopez, Passel, & Taylor, 2012) found the most common reasons were a desire for better civil and legal rights, better benefits or opportunities, family-related reasons, having a home in the U.S., and desiring an American identity.

Latinx Immigrants cont.'

- The New York Times (2013) reported that there is a growing body of mortality research on immigrants that demonstrates that the longer we live in this country, the worse our rates of heart disease, high blood pressure and diabetes.
- The report goes on to state that while American-born children of immigrants may have more money, they tend to live shorter lives than their parents.
- These health and mortality advantages are often framed as paradoxical given that they frequently occur in the context of significantly worse socioeconomic risk.



Strengths and Resilience

 A variety of cultural factors may provide powerful sources of emotional resilience.

 The Hispanic/Latinx Paradox (Palloni & Morenoff, 2001) is a phenomenon used to describe the communities' unique resilience to the usual negative health outcomes of poverty and other psychosocial challenges, such as infant mortality and low birth weight, in contrast with non-Latino Whites and other groups.

Strength and Resilience

 The "Barrio Advantage" - proposes that living in the same neighborhood as people with similar ethnic backgrounds confers significant advantages to one's health (Aranda et. al., 2011).

Threats to negative self-concept are buffered through the individual increasing their connectedness to ethnic group membership, thereby increasing personal worth for the individual. "Rootstraps," not Bootstraps (National Latino Fatherhood and Family Institute, 2012)

Social Justice: (Re)visiting our Practice Framework







lile do this because

the world we live in is

a house on fire an



e people we lave are burning.

Wellness

- Three primary sets of needs: personal, relational, and collective (Prilleltensky, Nelson, & Pierson, 2001)
- **Personal:** hope, optimism, control, physical health, mental well-being, meaning, and spirituality
- Relational: affection, caring, compassion, support, and meaningful participation in family
- Collective: Safety, adequate health care, crime-free environments, and just distribution of resources

Each supports one another and relies on the other for fulfillment and they do not compensate for one another (ex: personal growth cannot outweigh societal factors affecting health

Psychology of Liberation

- Social Justice practitioners accompany Latinx communities by working with them to develop collaborative relationships that address societal trauma, power inequalities within their relationships and within the larger society.
- Viable social justice work should optimize the best use of the professionals' creative energies and not put these very individuals under more pressure to become responsible for what they cannot ultimately solve.
- Many Latinx families have multiproblems (ex., medical, mental health, combined with employment challenges, poverty, immigration status, etc.

Psychology of Liberation

• While all of these areas need attention, many traditional forms of mental health care focus almost exclusively on the medical and mental health issues.

• Our focus centers on the individual, while the systemic interactions become background, contextual matters, and overlooked.

• Ultimately, the very social issues that are relevant to the health and wellbeing are background noise and tend to be excluded as legitimate forms of professional intervention. - "second class interventions" (Pakman, 2007).

 Education, work, legal issues, violence, ethnic/social dissonance, social networking, etc.

Anti-Racist Intersectional Framework

Definitions

- Anti-racism is the active process of identifying and challenging racism, by changing systems, organizational structures, policies and practices, and attitudes to redistribute power in an equitable manner.
- Intersectionality (Crenshaw, 1989): Describes the ways in which race, class, gender, and other aspects of our identity "intersect" overlap and interact with one another, informing the way in which individuals simultaneously experience oppression and privilege in their daily lives interpersonally and systemically.
- Intersectionality promotes the idea that aspects of our identity do not work in a silo. Intersectionality, then, provides a basis for understanding how these individual identity markers work with one another.

Why it Matters.

• An anti-racist intersectional approach struggles with oppression and power.

 Recognizes the social effects of racism and argues against omitting a racial analysis from any work allows racist systems, laws, and policies to continue operating within the status quo. The framework requires that all of our work centers on a racial analysis.

 Requires an understanding that the impact of racial oppression is not fully realized without interrogating the intersections of all forms of oppression—oppression based on SOGIE, class, immigration status, and ability. The frame requires exploration and analysis of how other forms of oppression are intertwined with and complicated by racial oppression.

 The anti-racist intersectional frame is an action-orientated frame. It critiques society's structure and its treatment of people and communities while providing a guiding approach for how to work towards a more just and equitable society.

Applying the Anti-racism Frame

Dominant Narrative

 Blacks and Latinx communities are disproportionately dying from Covid-19 due to the prevalence of underlying health conditions such as asthma, obesity, diabetes, etc.
Black and Latinx people should exercise personal responsibility and adhere to strict social distancing and make healthier food decisions.

Source: CSSP: Strengthening Families - A Protective Factors Framework

Anti-racist Intersectional Analysis

Black and Latinx communities are more likely to live in social conditions that make it harder to social distance; they are more likely to be part of the essential workforce, experience homelessness, and/or use public transportation. Food deserts create inadequate food supplies for people living in communities with high poverty. Racism causes Black/Latinx communities to have negative experiences with health care. Structural solutions that address lack of paid leave, poverty, space racism and racism in the health care system must be advanced.

Awake to Woke to Work (Equity in Practice, 2020)

All entities go through a cycle of change to do this work.

- Increased representation;
- A stronger culture of inclusion;
- The application of an anti-racism intersectionality lens in how organizations and programs operate.
- Awake Stage
- Woke Stage
- Work Stage

Awake to Woke to Work (Equity in Practice, 2020)

- AWAKE stage: Entities are focused on people and on building a workforce and boards comprised of individuals from different racial/ethnic backgrounds.
 - The primary goal is representation, with efforts aimed at increasing the number of people of different racial/ethnic backgrounds.
- WOKE stage: Entities are focused on culture and on creating an environment where everyone is comfortable sharing their experiences, and everyone is equipped to talk about equity and inequities. The primary goal is inclusion and internal change in behaviors, policies, and practices.
- WORK stage: Entities are focused on systems to improve equity. The primary goal is integration of a racial/ethnic equity lens into all aspects of an organization. Involves internal and external systems change and regularly administering a DEI assessment to evaluate processes, programs, and operations.

Community Level Engagement (Equity in Practice, 2020)

- AWAKE: Value the community and population served, and believe they are worthy of partnership and investment.
- Have developed personal relationships with community members.
- Value community members as formal/informal advisors to the organization.
- Use data analysis to assess the DEI impact of your work on the communities you serve.
- Disaggregate data: Collect, disaggregate, and report relevant data to get a clear picture of inequities and outcomes gaps both internally and externally.

Community Level Engagement (Equity in Practice, 2020)

- WOKE: Know that the Latinx communities you serve have been disenfranchised by systemic issues that were not created for us.
- Believe it is the role of the organization to help fix those inequities and injustices.
- Regularly seek community input on programs and services they provide or intend to provide.
- Have strong feedback loops to encourage and respond to community feedback about race bias, diversity, and inclusion.
- Based on disaggregated data, adjust programming goals to keep pace with changing needs of the communities you serve.

Community Level Engagement (Equity in Practice, 2020)

- WORK: Expect staff to work with the community to co-create solutions to problems as a key way to meet the organization's mission
- Understand that only through continuous interaction with, and in, the community you serve will DEI be achieved at a systemic level.
- Your organization is seen and valued as an ally by the community they work with and in Invest financial resources to support DEI in your communities.
- Ally with the community on DEI issues, even when they aren't directly related to the organization's mission
- Measure improvement using baseline data to see if program solutions are having a positive impact.

A Safe Distance.

"You can't understand most of the important things from a distance, Bryan. You have to get close."

> In Just Mercy: A Story of Redemption and Justice Stevenson (2014)

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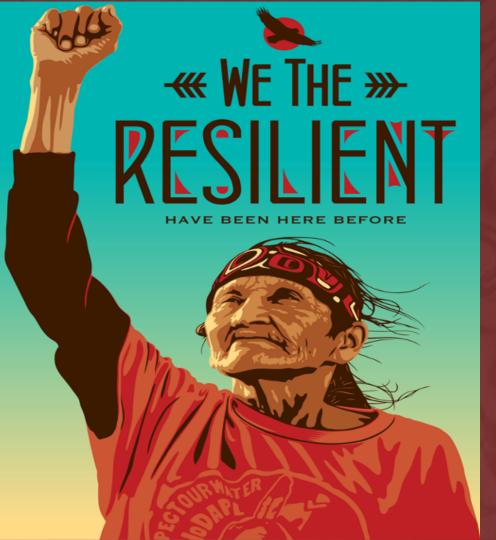


•WE THE PEOPLE •

DEFEND DIGNITY

What does it mean to be Human...

- Our professional knowledge and expertise does not eliminate us from being influenced by the things that matter to us, our lived experiences, social status, or privileges of personal identities.
- We are not the indifferent observers, whose personal biases, a priori commitments, emotional involvement, are absent in professional functioning.
- Carlson (2013) states, our new charge must be to "comfort the afflicted and afflict the comfortable" (p. 284).
- There is a difference between allyship and catering to the audience. The former is focusing on what is right, while the latter is appearing to be right (Coates, 2020).
 - Doherty (2013) states that the task of mental health providers is to be citizen-therapists.
 - "All clinical problems treated by therapists are thoroughly interconnected with larger public issues, but the public dimensions of psychological problems, and the civic action that could be appropriate to take, don't appear in our treatment manuals." (p. 17).



"In the end, we will remember not the words of our enemies, but the silence of our friends" - Martin Luther King Jr.,

In Lak'ech Ala K'in (I Am You and You Are Me)

> Tú eres mi otro yo. You are my other me. Si te hago daño a ti, If I do harm to you, Me hago daño a mí mismo. I do harm to myself. Si te amo y respeto, If I love and respect you, Me amo y respeto yo. I love and respect myself.

> > Luis Valdez (1973)

Q&A

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